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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/749,431	12/30/2003	Brian Alan Grove	2043.101US1	9577
49845	7590	03/11/2009	EXAMINER	
SCHWEGMAN, LUNDBERG & WOESSNER/EBAY			FADOK, MARK A	
P.O. BOX 2938			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402			3625	
NOTIFICATION DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
03/11/2009		ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

USPTO@SLWIP.COM

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/749,431	<b>Applicant(s)</b> GROVE ET AL.
	<b>Examiner</b> MARK FADOK	<b>Art Unit</b> 3625

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 October 2008.

2a) This action is FINAL.      2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 17-41 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 37-41 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 17-36 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:  
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/0256/06)  
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application  
 6) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

***Response to Amendment***

The examiner is in receipt of applicant's response to office action mailed 11/8/2007 which was received 10/8/2008. Acknowledgement is made to the amendment to claims 35 and the withdrawal of claims 37-41. Applicant's amendment and remarks were convincing, however after further searching and consideration the following new ground of rejection is provided.

***Examiner's Note***

Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers or figures in the references as applied to the claims below for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant, in preparing the responses, to fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the examiner.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 17-27 are directed to non-statutory subject matter. Based on Supreme Court precedence see Diamond v Diehr 450 US 175,184 (1981); Parker v. Flook, 437 US 584,588,n. 9 (1978); Gottschalk v Benson, 409 US 63, 70 (1972); Cochtane v Deener, 94 US 780, 787-88 (1876) a 101 process must (1) be tied to another statutory class (such as an apparatus) or transform underlying subject mater (such as an article or materials) to a different state or thing. Since neither of these requirements is met by the claim the claim is rejected as being directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claim 35 is rejected because the specification means includes the claiming of a signal or otherwise the claim may be interpreted as software per se. A signal as used in the claim is not patentable subject matter, see In Re Nuitjen, Docket no. 2006-1371 (Fed. Cir. Sept. 20, 2007) and MPEP 2106.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 35 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In this case the examiner is unable to determine if the means for features are software or hardware.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

**Claims 17-36 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by**

**Coffman et al (US 20040215467).**

In regards to claims 17-36, Coffman teaches all the features of the instant claims, For instance, Coffman discloses receiving a question associated with a listing for an item during an auction price-setting process;

receiving an indication from a seller to authorize provision of an answer to the question;

and selectively providing the answer to the question based on the indication  
(Para 0136-0140).

***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments with respect to claim 17-36 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Mark Fadok** whose telephone number is **571.272.6755**. The examiner can normally be reached Monday thru Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **Jeffrey Smith** can be reached on **571.272.6763**.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

***Commissioner for Patents***

***P.O. Box 1450***

Alexandria, Va. 22313-1450

or faxed to:

**571-273-8300** [Official communications; including  
After Final communications labeled  
"Box AF"]  
For general questions the receptionist can be reached at  
**571.272.3600**

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Mark Fadok/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3625